7: Shklovsky -- 112-113 T-3 (1891-92) 1916 Yakut-1-2
116, 158

"I have already mentioned that the people, especially the women, are extremely nervous, the nerve diseases of the latter manifesting themselves in two forms: 'menerik' and 'emiriatchka.' The former is the same as demoniacal possession, but the latter takes various forms, in the mildest of which the afflicted woman will start and cry out at an unexpected sound; in a more severe case she will repeat any sentence which has especially struck her -- some times a long piece of verse in a language unknown to her, exactly reproducing intonation and accent, just as she has heard it. I remember one instance of this. We were returning from Nijne Kolymsk and we stayed for a night at a Yakut hut. After we had removed our wraps there entered an unusually tall Yakut, very old, and dried up like a mummy, his features set like bronze. He had just come from the lake, where he had been fishing, and with his crooked, claw-like fingers he began to pull out of the net the still leaping [113] fish entangled it it. The sight reminded me of Longfellow's poem , and I quoted aloud:--

With hookèd fingers,
Iron-pointed hookèd fingers,
Went to draw his nets at morning
Salmon trout he found a hundred.

7: Shklovsky -- I.2-113 T-3 (1891-92) 1916 Yakut-2
116, 158

Great was my astonishment when I heard these words repeated; and I turned and saw a Yakut woman, evidently an emiriatchka, for in her normal condition she would certainly be quite incapable of repeating two words of any foreign language. She leaped up in fright when she saw my friend, whose spectacles had evidently terrified her, and seized a log to attack him. Then she cried, 'Abass!' and began to imitate every movement she saw, though she would not have been able to act upon a suggestion of any kind. The young people, for their own amusement, will dance, stand on their heads, etc., in the presence of an emiriatchka woman, and she will reproduce all their actions until she falls down from exhaustion.

This peculiar nervous desease is worse and more pronounced in the case of older sufferers; and a violent emiriatchka will sometimes spring, knife in hand, upon an object or a person. I saw emiriatchkas only among Russian settlers and Yakuts, and I never saw a male afflected with this desease. I wandered about for two weeks among the Chooktchi, but did not see one case. It may be that only people from a comparatively milder climate are subject to this illness, as, for instance, Russians and Yakuts, but not the aborigines of the polar region, such as the Chooktchi."

13: Sarytschew--42 N-3 (1785-90) 1806 Yakut
116, 158

"On the 19th of November we reached the river Aldan, and the first Jakutish jurts. On our entrance, a ludicrous scene ensued, which was not so perfectly agreeable to the poor doctor [RCH: i.e. the Russian doctor who accompanied the author on his journey], who felt himself violently assailed in the face, without being able to discover through his mask the quarter from whence he received the assault. From the shrieks, he doubtless conjectured it to be a female, as it in reality was, who, in a species of frenzy, had flown at the doctor to tear off his mask. After we had forcibly released him from her rude embrace, she continued screaming until she fell exhausted and senseless to the ground. The Jakuts regard such fits as a species of disorder attributable to terror, to which their women, particularly those in years, are very much subject. The patients in this case, have the name of miratschkens."

14: Krauss--168-169 E-5 (no date) 1888 Yakut
116, 158

The Yakuts (i. e. the autochthonous inhabitants of the Yakut area in general) are mostly very nervous people, especially the women, among whom persons addicted to the merjak disease are not rare. [169] Mr. Scukin, in his book "Eine Reise nach Jakutsk" derives the term merjak from Yakut imerech, which means "to get into a passion, to rage", He also states that merjak disease is not the only example of nervous, hysterical diseases which are found in the Yakut area, and that when he had been in Kolym and Zavisersk, there had been demoniacs obsessed with crying-mania. (p. 172)Anattack of merjak disease as a rule consists in provoking a groundless, instantaneous act of imitation in a person. If somebody makes a short cry, the patient suddenly starts up and imitates every movement however absurd of the other person.

14: Krauss--169 E-5 (no date) 1888 Yakut-1-2
116, 158

I had several opportunities to see how respectable people may confuse a merjak. [RCH: see category 116, p. 168-169] When I was traveling through Verchojan in an inspection trip, I called on the surgeon Mr. Klimovskij, a man of 60, who had a very good reputation in the vicinity. Soon the judge and the priest also went to the place. When they left, I accompanied them as far as to the door in the front house, where they were helped by my host to put on their clothes. I had never before seen an attack of merjak disease. As though the priest had known that, and had been willing to do me a favor, he threw himself at the judge and pretended to pull the cap from his head. At the same moment, Klimovskij, too, attacked the judge, and started calling him terrible terms of abuse; but he soon regained his composure, and was very much confused.

I had another opportunity to observe a merjak; that was aboard a steamship between Blagovješčenski and Chabarovka. Everybody who had nothing better to do, would follow the poor man; wherever he moved he would be greeted with sudden clapping of hands. The patient would get convulsions and load his neighbor with invectives; and when he soon became calm and modestly went to the other side, the same would happen again. As soon as one drops something in the presence of a merjak, he will repeat the act without any reason whatsoever. Thus, the merjak I was speaking of, who seemed to be a shop-assistant, had thrown his leather-cap into the water, dropped his teapot on the deck, and finally thrown his purse into the water, which made him particularly confused. The second captain of the steamer had made a loud cry and dropped a little

piece of wood into the water.

I also have seen, in the town of Olekminsk, a woman who used to be a serious and decent person. As soon as she was invited by insolent workmen with a loud cry and the command to do such and such things, she performed the most shameless acts.

14: Krauss--169 [2] E-5 (no date) 1888 Yakut
116, 158, 114

I have practically found one reference only in our scientific literature on the merjak disease (known also as olgandza), i. e. on chorea imitatoria, in the Archiv für gerichtliche Medizin, 1868, no. 2, where Dr. Kašin, who has studied the disease in the Yakut territory, has published an article. According to this author, the disease consists in irritability, and, partly, in convulsive movements and actions, which are committed by the patients without consciousness, by imitating the actions and movements of other people.

14: Krauss--169-170 E-5 (no date) 1888 Yakut
116, 158, 756, 828

This disease [RCH: i.e., merjak disease; see category 116, p. 168-169] sometimes takes such a form that the patients comply with the most absurd commands of anybody, and often become the puppets of naughty street arabs.

I have deemed it advisable to insist somewhat on this kind of disease, because the shamans, more than the ordinary autochthonous population, suffer from nervousness and irritability. This tendency is particularly outspoken when they get into ecstasy while performing a mystery, or when they try to excite themselves with wild, frightening cries, turns on the spot, and violent move-[170]ments of the head. The population is of the opinion that the shaman at the time of the mystery performance reveals prophesies, because he is obsessed by the devil, the spirit of darkness, or hell. The Satans either obsess the shaman of their own accord, or because they are invited by the latter.